(c) whether Forbes Capital Hospitality Index, measures macroeconomic factors along with societal factors affecting investment and corruption; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to improve the above factors, if any, as on date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) to (d) Forbes Capital Hospitality Index measures macro-economic indicators like GDP growth and international trade along with societal factors affecting investment, including poverty, bureaucracy, technological advancement, and corruption as a one-stop reference as to the degree to which nations are receptive to foreign investment. India has been given an overall scrore of 51.6, China has been given a score of 41.2 whereas Russia has been given a scrore of 40.9 points.

A number of other reports by reputed agencies have highlighted India's potential as an investment destination. Based on a survey among transnational corporations, reported in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD's), World Investment Report, 2006, India has been rated as the second most attractive investment destination. AT Kearney's FDI Confidence Index 2005 places India as the second most attractive investment destination.

The Government has put in place an attractive and investor friendly policy on foreign direct investment, in line with the overall economic policy. FDI policy and associated procedures are reviewed on a continuing basis. The Government has recently undertaken a major rationalization of the FDI policy and the changes have been notified vide Press Note 4 (2006 Series).

New legislative initiatives, viz, the Right to Information Act, and major programmes for the development of social and economic infrastructure will further add to India's attractiveness as an FDI destination.

Steps to control artificial shortage and prices of rubber

2570. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rubber prices have gone up due to "artificial shortage" and the All India Rubber Industries Association had

urged Government for import of 20,000 tonnes of natural rubber through State Trading Corporation for small scale units in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and the details about indigenous rubber production in tonnes; and

(c) whether Government have taken measures to control artificial shortage of rubber and high prices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) As the production of natural rubber during 2005-06 exceeded the domestic consumption, there was no shortage of natural rubber in the country. The production of Natural Rubber was 803,230 tonnes (approx.) in 2005-06.

As the price of Natural Rubber in the international market is much higher than the domestic price, the request of All India Rubber Industries Association for import of NR through State Trading Corporation did not appear to be feasible proposition.

The increase in rubber prices in India is on account of increased prices in the international market. However, the price increase in the domestic market has been less as compared to the international market.

Winding up of irrelevant bodies

2571. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the Boards and other bodies under the jurisdiction of his ministry related to trade, exports and export promotions and the locations of their headquarters;

(b) whether any review would be done to reduce the number of such bodies;

(c) whether it is a fact that many such bodies are actually a drain on public resources and public time; and

(d) the steps proposed by Government to wind up such bodies which are irrelevant today?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (b) The names of the Boards